

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the application. As will be discussed in detail below, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ukai (US 4,810,060) in view of Komiya (US 6,204,610). Claims 3-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ukai in view of Komiya and further in view of Rumbaugh (US 6,072,272). Claims 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ukai in view of Komiya, in view of Rumbaugh, and further in view of Codama (US 6,121,726).

Each of the rejections uses the Komiya reference as part of the rejection, which has a 102(e) date of March 17, 2000. The priority date for this Application is October 4, 1999. As noted by the Examiner, Applicant has properly claimed priority in this Application and has also submitted the priority document on November 16, 2000. Applicant is in the process of preparing a certified English translation of the priority document and will submit that document as soon as possible. As such, once the certified English translation of the priority document has been submitted, Applicant will have properly antedated the Komiya reference. Accordingly, because all of the rejections include the Komiya reference, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicant's attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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January 29, 2003